DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 934 CS 508 373

AUTHOR Rolls, Judith A.; Strenkowski, Michelle
TITLE Video Technology: Resumes of the Future.
PUB DATE Aug 93
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the World Conference on Cooperative Education (8th, Dublin, Ireland, August 30-September 3, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Skills; Cooperative Education; *Employment Interviews; Higher Education; Interpersonal Communication; Personnel Selection; Program Descriptions; *Resumes (Personal); Undergraduate Students; *Videotape Recordings
IDENTIFIERS Communicative Approach; Technology Utilization; *University College of Cape Breton NS

ABSTRACT

The University College of Cape Breton, an undergraduate institution in Nova Scotia, Canada, initiated a video resume pilot project to serve cooperative education students. The generic video resume lasts approximately 15 minutes and is patterned after the behavioral interview model, shifting the focus of the interview to examples of past behaviors. The goal of the video resume is to supplement the paper resume and supply the potential employer with insight into the student's personality and character, not to replace the actual employer/employee interview. The interview process is a highly structured, goal-oriented communicative event designed to elicit certain types of information from an interviewee. Preparation for the video resume course occurs via enrolment in a communication course. Still in the conceptual stage, the project envisions the prospective employer receiving from the placement coordinator a packet containing paper resumes, the videotape housing the student interviews, and a program guide. The videotape itself is composed of three segments: scenes of the educational institution; an introduction to the interviewer and a sketch of the specific cooperative education program being represented; and the actual interviews. The pilot project has yet to encounter a number of pragmatic issues, such as costs and the possibly negative effects of the videos on some students. However, as pictures create lasting impressions, the distribution of video resumes can supply prospective employers with supplementary nonverbal and interpersonal information that can benefit all stakeholders. (A sample program to accompany paper resumes is attached. Contains 12 references.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 362 934

VIDEO TECHNOLOGY: RESUMES OF THE FUTURE

Judith A. Rolls, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Communication
(902) 539-4207 - HOME
JRolls@CAD:UCCB.NS.CA

Michelle Strenkowski, B.A., B.Ed.
Director of Co-Operative Education Placement
MSTRENKOWSKI@CAPER2.UCCB.NS.CA

University College of Cape Breton
P.O. Box 5300, Sydney, Nova Scotia
Canada B1P 6L2
Telephone: (902) 539-5300
Fax: (902) 562-0119

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Rolls

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS508373

Presented at the 8th World Conference on Co-operative Education, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland, August 30 - September 3, 1993

VIDEO TECHNOLOGY: RESUMES OF THE FUTURE

Introduction and Rationale

Placing students in appropriate work settings is a major component of co-operative education programs. This is typically expedited by a placement co-ordinator who matches students (on the basis of their particular program, individual abilities, vocational aspirations, and personality factors) with prospective employers. When managers opt not to conduct campus interviews, students from non-metropolitan areas are hired on the basis of resumes and telephone interviews. Given that 65% of face-to-face communication is nonverbal (Birdwhistell, 1970), it follows that supervisors using telephone interviews rather than "in person" interviews are severely limiting the amount of information on which they base their hiring decisions. This can lead to mismatched placements. Further, assuming that institutions have imparted the requisite "technical" skills, managers are often more concerned with the student's interpersonal competence. The telephone interview does little to convey such information.

Clearly, engaging in a telephone interview rather than a face-to-face exchange sets students from smaller communities at a disadvantage when they vie for placements in major metropolitan areas. To remedy this situation, we propose that placement co-ordinators supply likely employers with both a paper resume and a video resume. The video resume consists of a videotaped generic or

adaptive interview of the student. Conducted by a professional interviewer, such a recording would furnish the hiring agent with insight into the candidate's personality and afford the student an opportunity to make an impression on the employer.

Use of video technology in this context is becoming more widespread. Northern Telecom, for example, employs an interactive model called VISIT TECHNOLOGY which allows a manager to interview candidates throughout Canada, provided the compatible technology is available. Students in media studies programs at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, produce a video portfolio featuring an oral presentation accompanied by excerpts of their work. We maintain that supplementing the paper resume with a video resume provides advantages to the major key players: employers learn more about the candidate's personality and character; students from remote areas have more equal access to potential employers; applicants sharpen their interview skills in the process; and, the videos serve as a marketing strategy for both the co-operative education program and the educational institution in general. Not meant to replace the interview, the video resume serves to provide information not attainable from a paper transcript.

This work attempts to describe a video resume pilot project currently being initiated at the University College of Cape Breton, an undergraduate institution in Nova Scotia, Canada. Delineating the model's specifications might be useful to others interested in implementing such a project. While we are presently preparing to conduct our first set of video resumes, we eventually intend to

make this tool available to every student enroled in our co-operative education programs. We see video resumes used not only for placement purposes, but rather, we aim to arm each graduating student with a second video for their personal use in seeking permanent employment.

Content of the Generic Interview

Effective communication is a major concern for employers. Wolvin and Coakley (1991) maintain that, "internal communication of employees, managers, and executives, as well as external communication to an organization's publics, are important determinants of productivity and, thus, are considered to be crucial channels for accomplishing the mission of the organization" (p. 152). Recent studies indicate that after the age of thirty-five, employees are promoted less on the basis of performance criteria and more on their communication style (Sherwood, 1989). Managers in contact with the Co-operative Education Placement office continually emphasize the need for students to possess the soft skills; that is, effective interactional abilities. They look for leadership qualities and interpersonal competence. One manager at Paramax Systems, Incorporated in Saint John, Canada, reported that he hires on the basis of students' demonstrated interpersonal skills, rather than the grades they attain.

Given the emphasis placed on communication competence, the goal of the generic interview is to predict how well co-operative education students perform in this capacity. While communication

competence may be defined from a number of perspectives, we adhere to the transactional model. This model focuses on the quality of the communication between individuals and is characterized by a minimum of stereotyping, a shared experience, and a willingness to self-disclose (Adler, Rosenfeld, & Towne, 1989). Both parties are active in the negotiation of meaning in this complex purposeful relationship (Barnlund, 1986). A person demonstrates communication competence when s/he possesses a large repertoire of communicative skills coupled with rhetorical sensitivity; that is, the ability to make context appropriate selections. Other characteristics of competence include involvement, empathy, cognitive complexity, and self-monitoring (Adler, Rosenfeld & Towne, 1989, p. 18-22). In other words, communication competence is contextual and contains a strong relational dimension. These are the qualities that the video resume interview will test for.

The generic video resume which lasts approximately fifteen minutes, is patterned after the behavioural interview model instead of the more traditional one. Research suggests that the best predictors of future behaviour is past behaviour in similar circumstances (Janz, 1986). The interpretation of "similar circumstances" is broadened to include various life and work experiences. Rather than probing the interviewee's credentials, experiences and opinions/feelings at length, as in the traditional interview model, the interviewer using the behavioural approach shifts the focus to examples of past behaviours. For instance, the interviewer might ask the interviewee to describe a time when he or

she worked with a difficult individual. Follow-up and probing questions to this initial inquiry would press the respondent to provide specific examples of how the situation was managed. Questions such as these should provide viewers with a more accurate grasp of the communication style the student is likely to exhibit in the employer's particular organizational setting.

Note that since the goal of the video resume is not to replace the actual employer/employee interview, but rather to supplement the paper resume and supply the potential employer with insight into the student's personality and character, the interviews will not be program specific. Hence, we use the term "generic" interview.

Generic Interview Outline

The interview process is a highly structured, goal oriented communicative event designed to elicit certain types of information from an interviewee. To facilitate self-disclosure on the student's part, a particularly salient feature in the behavioural model, the interviewee must feel a sense of ease and trust. Corbin, MacPherson, & Rolls (1993) note that, "The responsibility for creating a supportive and open climate, which is essential for a successful interview, rests with the interviewer" (p. 14). Consequently, it is imperative to designate an interviewer who displays "warmth (seasoned with professional restraint), interest, and genuine personal concern for the interviewee" (Andrews & Baird, 1989, p. 153).

A climate of trust and goodwill can be initiated by smiling and shaking hands, thanking the interviewee for coming, engaging in small talk and commencing with an open, non-threatening question. Once the tone of the interview has been set, the interviewer introduces the stock questions, each designed to determine how students conduct themselves in selected interpersonal /organizational predicaments. Due to the nature of the questions, interviewers must allow time for students to recall applicable events. Response time of 15-30 seconds in this context is not abnormal so silence should be interpreted as an indicator of co-operation.

The following sample stock questions may help employers to estimate if the students are team players (numbers 2 & 7), possess self-knowledge (number 5), deal well with others when they themselves are under stress (numbers 2 & 6), give and accept criticism in a reasonable manner (number 3), handle conflict situations effectively (number 4), and demonstrate the ability to laugh at themselves (number 8). Responses to the stock and the personalized probing/follow-up questions should permit the employer to assess the student's level of communication competence. Provided merely as a guide, note that some, all, or other such questions might be posed in a video resume interview.

Possible Stock Questions

1. What attracted you to this program? Describe the aspects that you like most?

2. Describe a time in your life when you were juggling several responsibilities at once and someone asked you to do yet another task.

3. Describe a time when you had to criticize a fellow worker's behaviour, work, or attitude.

   Describe a time when you were criticized.

4. Describe a time when a fellow employee or employer made you angry. What did you do?

5. Think of a time when an employer asked you to do a task that you felt was beyond your ability. Tell me about it.

6. Tell me about an incident when you were engaged in your daily routine duties and someone, other than your immediate supervisor, asked you to do something for him or her.

7. What do you do when you finish a work assignment before the end of the day?

8. Share with me a time in your previous work placement when you felt embarrassed or unsettled about something and now, upon reflection, you see the humour in the situation.

Preparing Students For The Video Resume Process

Preparation for the video resume process occurs via enrolment in a communication course. For several years now, students in most co-operative education programs at the University College of Cape Breton have been required to take a hybrid public communication course to learn theories of interview techniques, small group dynamics, and public speaking. The course also contains a strong experiential learning component. Students meet once a week in regularly scheduled small groups (five to seven persons per gathering) where they engage in videotaped structured learning exercises that complement course theory and/or they practice for upcoming classroom performances. In a study assessing student responses to this experiential learning model, Rolls (in press)

found that "learning by doing" works. Students report that "they enjoy the lab experience, find that course content is reinforced, gain insight into their communication strengths and weaknesses, become more sensitive communicators, and make better classroom presentations." Thus, having completed this course, students not only possess a knowledge of interview theory, they are well prepared affectively and behaviourally to actually engage in the interview process.

The Actual Interview Set-up

We propose, as closely as possible, to simulate an actual employment interview. The students will not meet the interviewer prior to the session nor will they be privy to the stock interview questions. Enough stock questions will be developed so that none need be repeated. This should prevent selected students from preparing stock answers. Upon arrival at the interview scene (one appropriate to the particular co-op program), applicants will be greeted by the interviewer and the session will commence. Only the interviewer, the interviewee, and the videographer/s will be present.

Although students will be accustomed to being videotaped, the camera/s and operator/s will be positioned in an unobtrusive location so as to minimize distraction. We will use two cameras, one focusing on the interviewee and the other featuring the interviewer and the setting at large. Later editing should produce a professional finished product.

The Video Resume Packet

Still at the conceptual stage, we envision the perspective employer receiving from the placement co-ordinator a packet containing paper resumes, the videotape housing the student interviews, and a program guide. We strive to make access to the video resumes as "viewer friendly" as possible. Therefore, on the top right hand side of the first page of each paper resume will be (a) the student's name, (b) the resume/interview number, and (c) the video footage where the interview may be accessed on the video tape.

The interviews, each possessing a resume/interview number that matches the corresponding paper resume will be presented on the videotape in alphabetical order. The name and resume/interview number of the student being interviewed, as well as the running video footage indicators, will be displayed continually at the bottom of the video screen. This should eliminate confusion regarding who is being interviewed at any one time and permit a supervisor to conveniently refer to a student's paper resume if so desired.

The program guide will index the names, resume/interview numbers, and the video footage numbers where each student can be accessed (See Appendix A). This format affords the employer the option of reviewing each interview or fast-forwarding to one or more that may be of particular interest.

The videotape itself is composed of three segments. Segment one opens with scenes of the educational institution. Accompanied

by low-profile background music, these scenes might consist of stock video used to introduce each set of resumes produced by the university. A pan of the specific area where students are trained follows the prelude to the campus at large. For instance, if chemical technology students were being featured, shots of the chemistry lab would be inserted. Given the perceptual strength of nonverbal information, this auxiliary visual stimulation should facilitate in the employer a deeper level of understanding regarding the type of facility and equipment to which the students had been exposed.

Segment two, possibly taped in the same setting, incorporates an introduction to the interviewer succeeded by a sketch or outline of the specific co-operative education program being presented. Taking approximately ten minutes, the interviewer might present his or her academic credentials, employment history, and present position. Courses and/or supplementary training unique to the program and success stories of graduate students might comprise the program review. A verbal listing of the video resumes profiled on the tape would end the segment.

Segment three headlines the actual interviews conducted in a context relevant to the particular co-operative education program.

Again, in keeping with our "viewer friendly" goal, the video footage of each segment is clearly identified in the program guide. This should accommodate the type of access most convenient to the viewer.

Conclusions

Still at the conceptual stage, we have yet to encounter a number of pragmatic issues. For example, we presently have access to equipment and personnel to create the video resumes for the pilot project. However, producing one for every cooperative education student has serious financial implications that must be addressed. Further, a student policy statement needs to be developed that answers questions like, "How do you deal with an extremely apprehensive student?" or "What do you do when a student does not like his or her video resume and does not want it forwarded to employers?" Too, there is the possibility that some students will not be hired or interviewed as a result of their video resumes. Clearly, a follow-up study is required to assess this model.

However, even with its drawbacks, we hold that placements based on the paper/video resume will be better matched than those completed merely on the basis of the paper credential and/or the telephone interview. Further, as more educational organizations embrace the cooperative education pedagogy, the potential for placement shrinks, making this process a competitive one. Hence, co-op coordinators are forced to adopt more of a marketing stance - they sell their institution, their programs, and their students. The video resume model aids in this endeavour. As pictures create lasting impressions, the distribution of video resumes can supply perspective employers with supplementary nonverbal and interpersonal information that, we believe, will benefit all

stakeholders.

REFERENCES

Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Towne, N. (1989). **Interplay: The process of interpersonal communication.** (4th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Andrews, P. H. & Baird, J. E. (1989). **Communication for business and the professions** (4th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers.

Barnlund, D. (1986). Toward a meaning-centered philosophy of communication. In John Stewart (Ed.), **Bridges Not Walls** (4th ed) (pp. 36-41). New York: Random House.

Birdwhistell, R. L. (1970). **Kinesics and context.** Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Corbin, C., MacPherson, C., & Rolls, J. (1993). **The handbook: A student guide to confident and competent communication.** Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Janz, T. (1986). **Behavior description interviewing: New, accurate, cost effective.** Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Myers, E. L. & Myers, M. T. (1992). **The dynamics of human communication: A laboratory approach** (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Rolls, J. A. (1993). (in press). Experiential learning as an adjunct to the basic course: Student assessment of a pedagogical model. **Basic Communication Course Annual V.**

Sherwood, A. (1987). As you climb the ladder, style counts. **Managment Review. 76,** 9.

Weisner, W. (1988). A meta-analytic investigation of the impact on interview format and degree of structure on the validity of the employment interview. **Journal of Occupational Psychology, 61,** 1-16.

Wolvin, A.D. & Coakley, C.G. (1991). A sruvey of the status of listening training in some Fortune 500 companies. **Communication Education, 40,** 152-164.

Zuckerman, M., DeFrank, R., Hall, J. & Rosenthal, R. (1976). Encloding and decoding of spontaneous facial expressions. **Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34,** 966-977.

APPENDIX A - SAMPLE PROGRAM TO ACCOMPANY PAPER RESUMES AND VIDEO INTERVIEWS

Chemical Technology Co-operative Education Students
University College of Cape Breton
P.O. Box 5300, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada B1P 6L2
Telephone: (902) 539-4207 Fax: (902) 562-0119

Placement Co-ordinator: Michelle Strenkowski

	VIDEO FOOTAGE
Segment One	
University College of Cape Breton Campus	000 - 012
Segment Two	
Chemical Technology Lab	013 - 025
Interviewer, Ms. Marie Doyle	026 - 040
Segment Three	
Student Interviews	

NUMBER	NAME	VIDEO FOOTAGE
1	Mary Anthony	041 - 075
2	Colin Brown	076 - 125
3	Brian Donaldson	126 - 175
4	Burt Forrester	176 - 225
5	James Fraser	226 - 275
6	Valerie Kozera	276 - 325
7	Jeanette Parsons	326 - 375
8	Jo-Anne Rolls	376 - 425
9	Terry Rudderham	426 - 475
10	Chris Walker	476 - 525